Myths and Facts
Niagara Falls Storage Site (FUSRAP) and
Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Site (DERP-FUDS)

Myth: The Corps, which was an agent of the Manhattan Project, is partly responsible for some of the contaminated waste, which was deposited in Niagara Falls. Therefore, it shouldn't it be the agency to oversee FUSRAP.
Fact: The Manhattan Engineering District was given a Congressional mission in a wartime situation, which differs from peacetime missions. Over the years, environmental awareness and the improvement of technology has enabled the Department of Defense to correct environmental damage caused by its activities. Our diverse team of professional, dedicated expert's care about the environment, are experienced and well trained in the most current, effective and safe technologies to perform our mission. We partner with other environmental agencies, such as New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), New York State Department of Health (NYDOH), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Region 2, as appropriate. These agencies review and provide input to our decision documents. The public may also review and comment on these documents, which are announced upon release and maintained in the site-specific Administrative Record Files. Copies of these records for the LOOW and NFSS projects may be found in the Lewiston Public Library, 305 South Eighth St., Lewiston, NY and at the Youngstown Free Library, 240 Lockport St., Youngstown, NY.

Myth: The Lewiston-Porter schools have high levels of contamination.
Fact: The Corps has no evidence of radioactive contamination from DOD activities at the school. The recent background radiation study supports this conclusion. The Corps also took some background soil samples on the school property, and analyzed them for metals and organic compounds. We presented the results of this background soil sampling at the June 2001 RAB meeting. The only significant findings of these background samples were that lead and arsenic are above the NY State background concentration of lead and arsenic in residential soils. The concentrations of lead, while slightly elevated above background, are below the level that the USEPA has found to be acceptable for a child's play area (as per TOSC regulation, 40 CFR Part 745: Lead; Identification of Dangerous Levels of Lead; Final Rule). According to information provided by the NYDOH, the levels of arsenic are comparable to levels of arsenic found in old fruit orchards in this part of New York State. Arsenic has not been found in elevated concentrations on the LOOW site; therefore, it cannot be migrating from the LOOW site onto the school property.

Myth: Elevated levels of radon had been discovered in the northeast corner of the Lewiston-Porter schools.

Fact: The Corps maintains a background radon monitoring location near the center of the Lewiston-Porter school property. The radon results have all been normal at the school monitoring location.

Myth: The Corps insists that no radioactive materials have ever been moved off LOOW or NFSS.
Fact: The Corps noted that no material from the waste containment structure (WCS) had migrated (moved) off NFSS; indeed soil and groundwater tests have confirmed that no radioactive materials have moved out of the WCS. We have never asserted that waste was not intentionally moved off site. Considerable intentional transport of waste has occurred, including the steel drums that were transferred to Painesville. The Corps' mission is to quantify contaminants that remain on site and to clean them up. We are not focusing on waste that has already been removed/disposed.

Myth: The Corps refused to answer questions about health risks, saying they were not in the business of health studies, and then they present the results of the gamma walkover at the Lewiston-Porter school and say that no hazard to the public was found.
Fact: A risk assessment is a little different than a public health assessment (study). The risk assessments that the Corps conducts at DERP-FUDS and FUSRAP sites follow the USEPA's Risk Assessment Guidance for Superfund sites. We start by determining the nature and extent of contamination, and then work outward, to determine if and how people may ever be exposed to the contamination at the site, under both current and future conditions. From these present and projected future exposure assessments, we evaluate the potential for harmful health effects to occur. The primary purpose of a risk assessment is to determine whether or not an area of contamination poses an unacceptable risk to the public. If the risk of potential human health effects is unacceptable, then we use this risk assessment information to devise a solution that will reduce this risk. This can be done by (1) treating or removing the contamination, or by (2) ensuring that no one becomes exposed. A public health assessment can only be conducted by an agency with a mandate to do so, such as the NYDOH, or the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does not have a Congressional mandate to do a public health assessment, only to do risk assessments that support remedial action decisions at the hazardous waste sites that it is responsible for managing. A public health assessment (as conducted by ATSDR) begins with an exposure assessment, in order to determine whether or not people are actually being exposed to contamination from a hazardous waste site. If there is no route of exposure from the waste site, then the public health assessment does not progress any further. The public health assessment is more focused on actual, rather than potential health effects, to the existing community. A full public health assessment may

include the results of medical, toxicologic, and epidemiologic studies and the data collected in disease registries.